

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1 1. A computer implemented method, comprising:
 - 2 (a) detecting that a printer has encountered an alert condition; and
 - 3 (b) in response to detecting the alert condition, displaying a user
 - 4 selectable object for initiating a performance by the computer of a specified
 - 5 function for assisting the user in resolving the alert condition.
- 1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the object is a hyperlink.
- 1 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:
 - 2 (c) initiating the printing of a document by the printer; and
 - 3 (d) wherein the printer encounters the alert condition while the
 - 4 printer is printing the document.
- 1 4. The method of claim 3, wherein the hyperlink refers to a Web page
- 2 that provides helpful information for resolving the alert condition.
- 1 5. The method of claim 3, wherein the function facilitates communication
- 2 between the user and an individual who can assist in resolving the alert condition.
- 1 6. The method of claim 3, wherein the function facilitates transmission
- 2 of an e-mail by the user to a pre-defined e-mail address.
- 1 7. The method of claim 3, wherein the function facilitates communication
- 2 between the user and a specified individual by using voice or broadcast video.
- 1 8. The method of claim 3, further comprising:
 - 2 (e) defining a computer function for assisting a user in resolving an
 - 3 alert condition of a pre-determined type; and

4 (f) if the detected alert condition is of the pre-determined type,
5 configuring the hyperlink so as to initiate a performance by the computer of the
6 defined function.

1 9. The method of claim 3, further comprising:

2 (e) receiving input from a user identifying a computer function for
3 resolving a printer alert condition of a pre-determined type; and

4 (f) if the detected alert condition is of the pre-determined type,
5 configuring the hyperlink so as to initiate a performance by the computer of the
6 identified function.

1 10. The method of claim 3, wherein the alert condition indicates a
2 consumable item in the printer should be replaced; and the specified function
3 facilitates a placement of an online order of a replacement consumable item with a
4 vendor.

1 11. The method of claim 3, wherein the alert condition indicates a toner
2 cartridge in the printer should be replaced; and the specified function facilitates a
3 placement of an online purchase of the toner cartridge with a vendor.

1 12. The method of claim 3, wherein the alert condition indicates an ink
2 cartridge in the printer should be replaced and the specified function facilitates a
3 placement of an online purchase of the toner cartridge with a vendor.

1 13. A server, comprising:

2 (a) means for receiving a request from a client; and

3 (b) means for responding to the request by transmitting a program
4 of instructions to the client, the program for enabling the client to:

5 (i) initiate the printing of a document by a printer;

6 (ii) detect if the printer encounters an alert condition while printing
7 a document; and

8 (iii) if an alert condition is detected, display a selectable object for
9 initiating a performance by the client of a specified function.

1 14. The server of claim 13, wherein the object is a hyperlink.

1 15. The server of claim 14, wherein the function is for assisting a user of
2 the client in resolving the alert condition.

1 16. The server of claim 14, further comprising:

2 (c) means for receiving input, from a system administrator, that
3 defines a hyperlink and associates the hyperlink to a particular type of printer alert
4 condition; and wherein the program of instructions is further for enabling the client
5 to display the defined hyperlink if the client detects that the printer has encountered
6 the particular type of alert condition.

1 17. The server of claim 14, wherein the hyperlink refers to a Web page
2 that provides helpful information for resolving the type of error condition detected.

1 18. The server of claim 14, wherein the alert condition is a paper jam
2 condition and the hyperlink refers to a Web page that provides information
3 regarding how to clear a paper jam in the printer.

1 19. The server of claim 14, wherein the alert condition is a low
2 consumable condition and the specified function facilitates the purchase of a
3 replacement consumable.

1 20. The server of claim 14, wherein the hyperlink is configured to facilitate
2 communication between the client user and a specific individual.

1 21. The server of claim 13, wherein the server is incorporated within the
2 printer.

1 22. A computer readable medium embodying a program of instructions for
2 causing a computer to perform method steps, the method steps comprising:

3 (a) detecting if the printer encounters an alert condition while
4 printing a document; and

5 (b) displaying a hyperlink referring to a Web object for assisting a
6 user in resolving the particular type of alert condition detected.

1 23. The computer readable medium of claim 22, wherein the method steps
2 further comprising:

3 (c) in response to user input, initiating the printing of the document
4 by the printer.

1 24. The computer readable medium of claim 23, wherein the method steps
2 further comprise:

3 (d) defining the hyperlink based upon the type of error condition
4 detected.

1 25. The computer readable medium of claim 22 wherein the Web object is
2 a Web page that provides information for resolving the alert condition.

1 26. A server, comprising:

2 apparatus for responding to a pre-defined request received from a
3 client by transmitting a program of instructions to the client, the program for
4 enabling the client to:

5 (i) detect if the printer encounters an alert condition while printing
6 a document; and

7 (ii) if an alert condition is detected, display a hyperlink for
8 initiating a performance by the client of a specified function for assisting a user in
9 resolving the alert condition.

1 27. The server of claim 26, wherein the program further enables the client
2 initiate the printing of the document by the printer.

1 28. A printing system, comprising:

2 (a) a printer operable to print a document and to serve a program
3 of instructions to a client;

4 (b) a client operable by a user to request the program from the
5 printer, the program enabling the client to:

6 (i) initiate the printing of a document using the printer;
7 (ii) if the printer encounters an error condition while printing the
8 document, display a hyperlink for initiating a performance by the client of a
9 specified function to assist the client user in resolving the alert condition.

1 29. The printing system of claim 28, wherein the client is a personal
2 digital assistance (PDA).

1 30. The printing system of claim 28, wherein the client is a personal
2 computer.

1 31. The printing system of claim 28, wherein the hyperlink refers to a Web
2 page that provides helpful information for resolving the specific type of error
3 condition encountered by the printer.